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A scrutiny of the discipline of English focuses on the needs of the junior college, the place of pedagogy, and the training of instructors. The attitude of the public toward the discipline of English is discussed, as is the present image of English as a means for training English majors rather than for developing teachers. In conclusion, emphasis is given to the importance of a concept of the discipline which focuses on the "perceiving" person in the center and trains the teacher of English as well as the English major. (BN)

Junior College English and the Discipline

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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My friend Mike Shugrue keeps telling me that terminology is one of the greatest problems among professionals in our field, that if you use certain words not only will you puzzle some people, you will irritate others. For instance, to talk of grouping students according to the compatibility of a certain kind of teacher with a certain kind of student is an interesting idea, but it would be better not to describe that factor as "teachability," even if the man carrying out some very promising experiments with "teachability" groups calls it that. The point is a good one, of course. How much the impact of a good idea depends on the acceptance of its name is a nice question.

Sometimes, however, you may feel that an idea is important enough and the name is so right that you choose to risk a little controversy over a term. I feel that way about the concept of the discipline, or more exactly the discipline of English. One thing going against the word "discipline" is its connotation of science and math and the presumed opposition to humane enterprises. Another, related, is the suggestion of bearing down ruthlessly on the learner with rationality and driving the art out of the experience.

I suppose all this is rather obvious. The concept of the discipline, though, I think deserves our attention as we look at the present state of English and consider the place of pedagogy and the training of instructors. A discipline arises from a shared set in the thinking of a community of experts toward some focus of experience that the community wants to understand and exploit. The set or stance that we develop together involves the capacity to sort out experiences, to make relevant discriminations, to consider alternatives, to identify absurdities, and to accept relationships with any other knowledge that proves helpful and relevant. A discipline deals with a subject and the subject is the result of the discipline's mode of inquiry. To

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be trained in the discipline is to learn to share the set of mind and the mode of inquiry. The discipline is viable because it illuminates the subject matter and makes its understandings accessible in the long run to ordinary people. It absorbs the specialist's rigor and rewards it with new understanding on the one hand, but on the other it rejects academic bigotry that would deny relevance to the larger community or engagement with related disciplines even though they promise to yield some rewarding reciprocity.

Above all, it recognizes that knowledge is generated only out of the perceptions of the human person, organized through the discipline's set toward experience, of course, but made by a person and communicable to other persons, so that generating new knowledge and communicating or teaching it are inextricably related. Pedagogy is the facet of the discipline that is responsible for making it accessible to the larger community and thus acquiring for the discipline the support, respect, and involvement of the community.

Thus it seems obvious to me that scholarship and pedagogy have a natural and complementary relationship within the discipline and if they really prove to be at war with each other we must ask if we have a real subject and a real discipline. And indeed the public might properly ask why it should support such an activity since it must appear to be developing a secret society or priesthood, one that should carry on its activities through private initiative or philanthropy.

I believe that if we allow ourselves to contemplate English within the framework of the discipline, we then find ourselves not only discarding the defensive division between English and pedagogy (we might then really make education departments redundant.) but we would be able to admit that literature narrowly considered is not necessarily the heart and center but just a very important part of English, without feeling that we are thereby

abandoning our great purpose. A mathematician might call this attempt to unify our purposes the quest for elegance, for ways to relate the parts of the whole with the greatest simplicity, eliminating divisions and priorities that do not serve. So much for the concept of the discipline.

I am suggesting that it is in our interest to deserve public support because we personify relevance and engagement as we conduct our affairs.

Now I would like to present some facts and point out what seem to me logical conclusions if we accept such a view of the discipline of English.

If the public has trouble understanding what English is, it is probably just as unaware of the magnitude of its commitment to higher education. U.S. higher education projections to 1977 taken from The Chronicle of Higher Education (June 10, 1967) show that the most dramatic growth will occur in the junior college movement. For example, the total undergraduate population from 1967 to 1977 will increase from 5,317,000 to 8,259,000; whereas the two-year college population will go from 952,000 to 1,685,000.

There are probably 14,000 junior college English instructors in the United States. A rough projection but the best available at this time indicates that we may have 30,000 by 1978. Allowing for instructor dropout, retirement, and death, we will probably need 18,000 new junior college English instructors by 1978, or 1800 per year during the next ten years. It is obvious that the M.A. in English will be almost the sole source of trained instructors in the junior college for some time to come. So we must ask if there will be an adequate supply of M.A.'s from the graduate departments offering the Ph.D. According to the Allen study they turned out 4800 M.A.'s in 1966. The 123 institutions not granting the Ph.D. grant approximately 725 M.A.'s per year.

The Allen study reports that 53 colleges now granting only the B.A. have plans to offer the M.A. but do not specify exactly when. Clearly

there will be an increase in the number of M.A.'s in English granted during the next ten years, but the numbers contributed by our 53 new non-Ph.D.-granting colleges will not be great, and as for their alleviating the junior college shortage, the increase will probably be cancelled out by the number of those M.A. recipients who aspire to the Ph.D. and therefore do not go immediately into teaching.

Since junior colleges will need 1800 M.A.'s per year, they would, provided that competition would allow, hire 37% of the new M.A.'s per year. The U-4's, who can compete perhaps better than the junior colleges, will need 1900/year or 39% of the new M.A.'s. This does not take into account the high school departments who are not going to be denied a major share of the M.A.'s. America's high schools will be hiring about 12,500 new instructors each year; i.e., they -- if they could -- would consume 260% of the supply. To sum it up, the actual need is going to be 336% of the supply.

But the recipient of the traditional M.A. in English is certainly not prepared to handle the range of assignments that will be his as a member of the staff of the open-door, two-year college, partly because the premises upon which his training is fashioned are the wrong ones. The typical M.A. in English is not a teaching degree. In the universe of the U-4 English establishment, the M.A. is an integral piece of the larger design that generates the Ph.D. in literature. Don Cameron Allen, recognizing this, has observed that "we of the graduate departments should observe the rules of social duty, like other professionals who are supported by society . . . The Ph.D. scholar should never forget that society keeps him physically alive because he is a teacher" and certainly it is implied that he is a teacher of teachers.

The U-4 English departments sometimes offer M.A. candidates one or two courses in the teaching of English and they usually have arrangements with the departments of education for conducting practice teaching and courses in pedagogy, but these are expediencies which, while they may be held up to the

public as the English teaching profession's means of serving society's needs, are in fact the means of keeping intact their own universe, whose primary raison d'etre as they see it is the production of scholars. There is within this universe no real intention and no conscious design created to provide the society with those benefits that it sees as the first reason for supporting the graduate departments, the education of teachers who will raise the level of literacy and personal autonomy of citizens in a democratic society.

The forms of indoctrination in the M.A.'s training are subtle and they do not develop a role for the English teacher that the public would want if it were allowed to know and helped to understand. The model before the English major and M.A. candidate is the scholar-lecturer who makes and reports knowledge about literature, and the emphasis is on information and understanding of the body of the subject matter rather than on growth, awareness, skill acquisition, i.e. the learner. The body of knowledge is firmly encapsulated by the English department schema, so that matters relevant to the successful development of literacy for poor students are usually ignored. The conscious attack with students upon a piece of reading to extract meaning and relate to form, the conscious examination of engagement and response by the student in relation to a work, the drama of the classroom itself, the conscious exploitation of the power of writing in that situation as an instrument of awareness, the development of a milieu that allows classmates to learn from and teach one another: these create esoteric and heretical sounds in our ears -- only, I think, because we have an image of English that is based on what is useful and relevant to the training of English majors and ultimately scholars, not on the development of teachers. With such unarticulated tensions extant in our field it should not be surprising that teachers and professors fail to hear each other and that the ordinary citizen has little understanding of and respect for English.

What must we do to train a teacher of English as well as an English

major and incipient scholar? Certainly we must bring more breadth to his education through interdisciplinary courses that explore and make functional what is at the edges of English. Teachers need to know more about anthropology, psycho-linguistics, learning theory -- or, more exactly, how the human being develops his syntactical and conceptual equipment -- and something of the strategies of communication in groups. Perhaps this is enough to suggest what kinds of experience seem foreign to us, what we do not know how to talk about successfully because we have never consciously made the teaching of English our business. Instead we have said that teaching -- the abstraction -- we will turn over to the department of education. But teaching, the abstraction, has little relation to the teaching of English. In fact, the English teacher and especially the English teacher in the junior college, must develop a range of practices that equip him with genuine choices in facing the broad spectrum of teaching activities that are subsumed under "English" in the junior college.

There are common responses we have all heard to any suggestion that English ought to be different from what it is, that the training of an English teacher might be extended or broadened -- especially if this broadening suggests that teaching and learning are to become a conscious part of training. One is to say that there isn't room for it; the prospective teacher's schedule is already overcrowded. This of course appeals to the harried and innocent graduate student.

Another is that you cannot learn about teaching by studying it directly, and that attempts to deal with teaching <u>per se</u> only result in jargon and cant. There is some truth in this, and some people like believing that this is the whole truth. Here is a quotation from one university respondent to a trial questionnaire that our study put out early this year:

> I have done a stint at teaching "culturally disadvantaged" college students (and aren't we all so disadvantaged, only in different degrees?) and am aware of the truculence and disaffection arising from the urban ghetto as well as the puzzlement and boredom arising

> from the pastoral ghetto; I am just as distressed by the placid and self-satisfied competence of the student from no ghetto. The good teacher is always in an ad hoc situation which no amount of cant about inter-personal relationships and psycho-this-or-that will ultimately help him out of. The one thing he holds onto is the belief that good writing and good literature are important, and I would always suspect a teacher who spends very much time on peripheral "teaching technique" subjects, or indeed on linguistics (a fascinating subject -- I am myself a pupil of X at Y college) or fancy grammars, of having lost sight of his major task, or not really being very interested in it.

In our questionnaire we risked using such terms as "psycho-linguistics", "language acquisition", "dialectology", "unstructured writing to develop awareness", "response to reading", "identity", "culture of the poor", even, heaven help us, "sensitivity development and interpersonal dynamics." I suggest that at least some of these terms are as meaningful as the terms "genre", "novel", or Rromantic movement", if you pause for a moment and reflect on what has happened to the social and intellectual context out of which the older, more solid meanings of these last three arose and what history has done to their usefulness. I think they are all useful and meaningful, and they all have their limitations. It is just that the last three -- romanticism, the novel, genre -- are firmly established in the kind of community we have made around our anti-discipline and the others seem in some sense to be potentially disruptive, but I think we could show the relevance of all of these to the problem of conducting a more effective two-year college English program.

If we can agree that preparation for teaching should be one of the affirmed aims of the English department program, something that the Allen study recommends for the Ph.D.; if we allow that aim into the family of humanistic intentions that we profess, it seems to me that we can resolve the problem of outside encroachment. We can avoid becoming anxious about what we can allow into our training programs without degrading English, if we make some legitimate discriminations between the kinds of knowledge we want our candidates to carry away.

In relation to our teaching we acquire knowledge for two uses that are not mutually exclusive. To be a good instructor we must have well ingested the knowledge enveloped by our discipline. Much of that we hope to make part of our students' consciousness, its content, its form, and the pulsations that arise in him from an awareness of the interaction of the two. But we all know that this occurrence happens as much by indirection as by direction, and we realize that we often conduct these indirections by falling back on the information at the fringes of English that resides on our shoulder as related knowledge or background while we are teaching, knowledge that on occasion is critically relevant and is brought into play to meet unexpected situations or to move to new stages of instruction. Some of this is an awareness, partly instinctive, of how students can allow themselves to acquire insights and concepts, an awareness of what their universe is like and what it can entertain at that stage of their development, or with the background they bring to the class.

I suggest that to conduct a viable junior college program a large repertoire of concepts and understandings on the fringes of English, related to the culture of the poor and the excluded, to language and perception, to the achievement of awareness through writing, to the myriad personal responses to literature, to dialects, etc., is brought into play by the instructor. You may be your own judge as to whether these are relevant to instruction in the lower division classes of the university. It seems to me that they are, although I think there has been a kind of student in the university who required fewer concessions, since he has in an earlier generation been both a more autonomous and a more docile and satisfied learner. Note that I say "has been a kind of student", because the future shape of teaching and the conduct of students seems uncertain to me.

The strength of the concept of the discipline is that it reminds us at every point of the perceiving person in the center making and communicating

as one seamless operation. The glorious moments of creation and the pedestrian moments of working through communication hangups have a commonness that enhances both if we really subscribe to the idea that the humanities are important because they humanize by confirming facets or making real unrecognized facets of the human person. Thus polarization is a denial of the humane enterprise and the elite and prosaic activities are not reducible to self-flattering opposites.

Following is a statement submitted to our study by a two-year college English chairman in the Southwest. He has the human person identified as the center of his program:

> The junior college student more often than not differs from his four-year college counterpart in both goals and abilities. The junior college student is likely to rely upon himself for financial support; he is likely to come from the lower socio-economic level; he is likely to be the student whose high-school grades were nothing to brag about; and he is likely to be attending college for practical reasons (e.g., job training) rather than intellectual reasons even though he may say that he wants the four-year academic degree. These factors make the task of the junior college English instructor more difficult than that of the university English instructor.
>
> The junior college instructor has to be at least as concerned with the characteristics of his students as he has to be with his subject matter. The instructor's responsibility in a junior college is not so much to his subject matter and his colleagues as it is to his students who seek a sense of personal dignity. If the junior college English instructor can find out what it is that each student seeks, he can help each student incorporate language, literature, and composition into the attainment of these goals and a more humane existence. It would seem that junior college instructors must not only involve their students more in the subject but also be more involved in their students' lives and aspirations than is necessary at the university level.
>
> English teachers in both junior colleges and universities share the responsibility of offering academic training to students seeking entry into the professions via the four-year degree. For these people the offerings and aims of both institutions are similar. But for the terminal student the responsibilities of the junior college, unlike those of the university, are in a class by themselves. The two institutions have little in common in this respect. This may not be the way it should be, but it is what makes the junior college unique.

Finally, I want to take note of some recent studies which I think confirm the great need for our discipline to open itself up to whatever is

relevant. We know more about today's students than we have known in the past, partly because they are insisting that we pay more attention to them. We have had some good studies released during the last year. One by Medsker and Trent documents the fact that college, even a limited amount, really does make a difference, that within personal limits it produces a more humane, less authoritarian person. Another, a study of Stanford and University of California activists, No Time for Youth, shows that the activists are unusually capable, intelligent, and open people -- and young. Here the concept of identity -- not unrelated to the teaching of English -- becomes very important.

Another, a fine summary of studies of the junior college student by Cross, can help us size up our assignment realistically. Here is a quotation:

> Intellectual interests clearly differentiate high school graduates who do not enter college, those who enter junior colleges, and those who attend four-year colleges. Junior college students have a more practical orientation to college and to life than do their more intellectually disposed peers in four-year colleges. They are interested in applied college curricula, and they expect their future satisfactions to come from business and financial success. Four-year college students are somewhat more likely to value humanitarian pursuits.
>
> Junior college students score lower on measures of autonomy and nonauthoritarianism; they are more likely to be cautious and controlled, less likely to be venturesome and flexible in their thinking. Taken as a whole, the research picture reveals young people who are not sufficiently sure of themselves to venture into new and untried fields, and they appear to seek more certain pathways to success and financial security.

It is complemented by another from No Time for Youth:

> Some form of challenge is commonly assumed to be an effective mode of educating and inducing change in students. But challenges that go too sharply against the student's cognitive grain may be precisely the techniques to be avoided. In the case of authoritarian students, well-organized, structured content and course style may be more effective in inducing change than the more general, less concrete, and more ambiguous, which they are apt to resist and reject strongly, so long as their authoritarianism persists, the liberalization and humanization of such students may more likely occur within more highly structured college environments, disciplines, and instructional approaches.

> It seems apparent that there cannot be one ideal curriculum suitable for all students. Yet we see little evidence that the need for diverse educational approaches is given sufficient consideration in higher education. In fact, we hardly have sufficient knowledge at present to provide a basis for differentiated higher education. Our findings indicate a need for experimental educational efforts. Authoritarian and otherwise anti-intellectual students present a considerable challenge, for their well-being may require educational methods distinctly different from those effective with other types of students. They must be led gradually, by means adapted to their particular life-style.

Finally, I would add that the junior college should develop a climate in which students can learn who they are and what they are capable of. They frequently come to us poorly identified in their own minds and it is in the midst of the junior college experience that they discover whether they are terminal or transfer students. We do them no service by telling them who they are by testing, counseling, or more subtle means as they come in our doors. Many of them have had such "messages" for twelve years. Some students need great freedom but within a structure that insists upon repeated performance with regular closure. Others, in a sense more advanced in their remediation, find satisfaction and security in a direct cognitive attack on skill acquisition. Junior college students need fresh, evocative experiences as well as steady supportive practices, and this demands of the English staff openness, flexibility, and a capacity to live with ambiguity. There is rigor in this too, and it implies psychic toughness.